

- (b) a slightly longer wing (135-144, cf. 128-137), and
- (c) a longer tail (52-60, cf. 44-50).

The last character does not appear to have been noticed before but is very consistent.

75, ABDUL REHMAN STREET,  
BOMBAY-3,

HUMAYUN ABDULALI

January 9, 1970.

#### 7. OCCURRENCE OF THE GREAT SNIPE, *CAPELLA MEDIA* (LATHAM) IN BURMA AND INDIA

Only three records of the Great Snipe [*Capella media* (Latham)] have been accepted from peninsular India and, though it is said to have been obtained in Ceylon and the Andamans, it has not been recorded from Burma. It may therefore be interesting to note that in the course of cataloguing the Society's collection, we found 9 birds of this species listed as *Capella gallinago* (Linnaeus). Six of them are from Iraq and Persia but, in addition to one from near Bangalore collected by Capt. A. Boxwell on 28th October 1910 (the label now reads: "Capt. A. Boxall, 2 December 1910") and which is one of the three records referred to above, there are two more, from Walmer, Nilgiris, and Moulmein, Burma.

The first of these two specimens was collected by Phythian-Adams and is marked as received in November 1933. It was no doubt sent to the Society as it appeared different from the Common Snipe but was apparently marked *C. gallinago* by one of the Society's assistants and the identification not checked upon subsequently. This forms the fourth record from India.

The Burmese bird was collected at Moulmein by W. A. W. Dawn but the label bears no date. This also was marked as the Common Snipe and has been overlooked for many years. Mr. Dawn was elected a member of the Society on 28 February 1899, a fact which gives some indication of the date of collection.

In addition to the longer wing the additional amount of white on three of the outermost tail-feathers is very distinctive. The sketch in IND. HANDBOOK (reproduced from BR. HANDBOOK) represents this correctly but reference is made to the Key in the FAUNA which refers to the black base to the feathers and implies that the distal portion is pure white and without the black bars. The Key in IND. HANDBOOK (2 : 278) perhaps needs another correction, for it specifies a wing under 150 mm. The

specimens available have their wings 138 (frayed)—150. The upper limit would be larger in fresh birds. The tarsus is noticeably stouter than in *gallinago*.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,  
HORNBILL HOUSE,  
SHAHID BHAGAT SINGH ROAD,  
BOMBAY-1 BR,

HUMAYUN ABDULALI  
SHANTA NAIR

October 25, 1969.

#### 8. NOTES ON INDIAN BIRDS-11. ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF *STERNA FUSCATA* LINNAEUS IN INDIAN LIMITS—A CORRECTION

At a monthly meeting of the Bombay Natural History Society held on 4 July 1887 (*JBNHS* 2:286), reference was made to a Sooty Tern *Sterna fuliginosa*, now *S. fuscata*, said to have been obtained by W. F. Sinclair at Alibag, Kolaba District; this is noted as the only record from the area in "The Birds of Bombay and Salsette" (1939, *JBNHS* 40:636).

In 1938, Sálím Ali, Charles McCann and I collected numerous remains of terns and their eggs on the Vengurla Rocks, off Malwan, south of Bombay, and among them the smaller wings could be divided into two groups, brown and grey. Sálím Ali who compared our specimens with specimens in the Society's collection (1939, *JBNHS* 43:448) divided the brown wings into two groups: (a) measuring 237 (2), 240, and 242 mm., which he identified as *Sterna anaethetus*, recorded there by Hume in 1875, and (b) 2 measuring 270 and 294, which he identified as *Sterna fuscata*, making the only nesting record for the area, the next nearest being from the Laccadives. It may be mentioned that the wings found by us have not been preserved.

On 21 October 1947, I obtained 2 terns out of a loose party of 5 or 6 on wooden boxes and similar rubbish floating in a calm patch in the sea, about a mile south of Bombay and 5 miles off the mainland. These were identified as *Sterna fuscata* by Sálím Ali.

When working out my first collection from the Andamans (1968), I was unable to separate the material in Bombay into two species *fuscata* and *anaethetus*, and one of the two just mentioned was sent to the Smithsonian Institution where they identified it as *anaethetus*. Presumably for this reason this record is omitted from the INDIAN HANDBOOK, but a reference is made to Sinclair's specimen.

While cataloguing the collection (1969), the bird from Alibag seemed to me to be no different from the several others accepted as *anaethetus*,